

4th ID Pioneers New Division Design

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As the Army's Experimental Force (EXFOR), the 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized) is at the tip of the spear, guiding the Army and sister services into the Information Age and onto the Digital Battlefield. The division's mission statement contains two very important, simultaneous tasks that the unit must constantly balance. The division is tasked to, "... maintain combat readiness to deploy on order for commitment to operational missions, while preparing for and conducting large-scale Force XXI experimentation to test improved lethality, survivability, operational tempo, sustainability, organizations, deployability, joint/combined linkages, and versatility of the force for the 21st century."

This dual responsibility has kept the units within the division performing at a very fast pace for the past year. Even though it is an infantry division on paper, the division is currently organized as an armored division. The reason for this is that the division was reflagged from the 2nd Armored Division to the 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized) in December of 1995. The former home of the 4th ID, Fort Carson, Colo., still maintains the division's 3rd Brigade Combat Team, to include the supporting slice elements. The division headquarters and the rest of the units are located at Fort Hood, Texas.

The current division composition was changed during the summer, when the Army unveiled its new division design, called Division XXI. The first division to undergo the transformation is the 4th ID. The new division will be smaller — going from an authorization of nearly 16,700 to slightly over 15,000. That translates to about 24 percent fewer combat platforms in the division, most of those combat-arms reductions occurring in the armor and infantry battalions. Despite fewer personnel and vehicles, the unit will achieve increased combat lethality, survivability, and speed through Information Age technologies and logistic efficiencies. Also, the design will take important steps toward fully integrating Reserve forces into the divisions of the future. Much of the data used for the re-

design was extracted from numerous Advanced Warfighting Experiments conducted at Fort Hood and Fort Irwin, Calif. during the past three years.

The physical organization of the Division XXI design is very similar to the current heavy division; that is, it maintains its three maneuver brigades, a division artillery, a division support command, an aviation brigade and several separate battalions comprising the division base. However, within those units, some significant changes will occur:

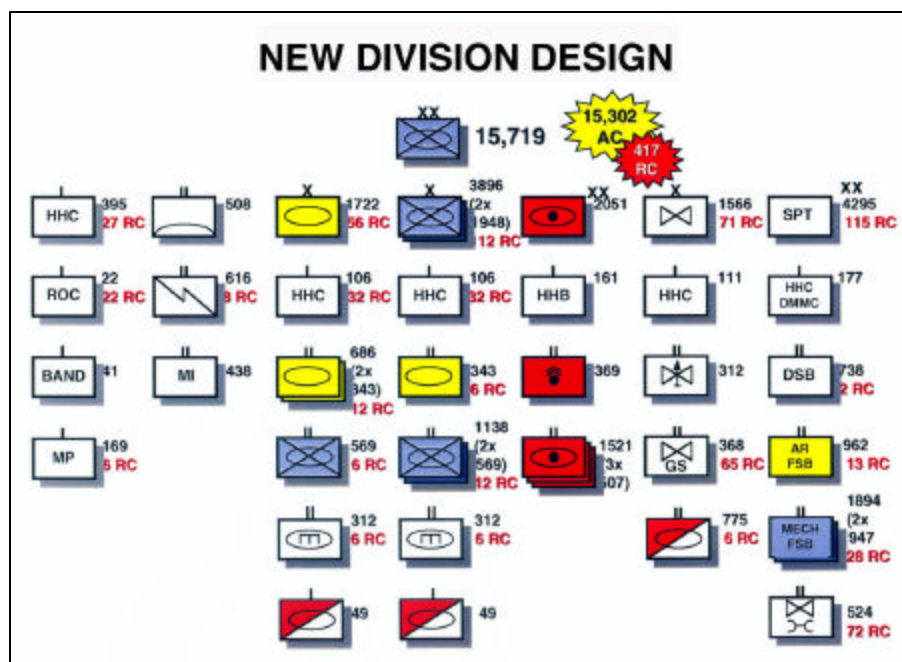
- Each maneuver brigade will have its own scouts — the Brigade Reconnaissance Team (BRT).
- The maneuver battalions will be reduced to three companies with a total of 45 combat vehicles. Company organizations will remain the same.
- The mortar platoon will be standardized at four 120mm mortars each.
- The infantry dismounts will be standardized at three squads of nine men in each mechanized infantry platoon.

- The Division Artillery's Multiple Launch Rocket System battalion will have three MLRS batteries of six launchers each.

- The Engineer Brigade HHC will be replaced by a planning section at the division level. An engineer battalion will be habitually associated with each of the three maneuver brigades.

- Combat Service Support is centralized. They return to maneuver formations in the form of Forward Support Companies (FSC) associated with maneuver battalions and Forward Support Battalions (FSB) associated with the maneuver brigades. Logistic resupply will be distribution-based, instead of supply-based.

- There will be organic Reserve Component positions and organizations in the division. They will wear the same patch, train to the same level, and be accountable for the same mission requirements. They will be included in Command and Control/Staff augmentation, signal, aviation, and medical positions/units. The total number will be around 500.



- Some units, such as the Chemical Company and water purification units, will be “passed back” or moved to Corps.

The 4th ID has already implemented many of the changes, starting with the former Task Force XXI Brigade, the 1st Brigade Combat Team. Restructure of the remainder of the division will occur within the next year. During the transition, the command is committed to consider personal and professional concerns while fulfilling Army requirements.

The new division’s modular design allows for quicker deployment and can be tailored to the full range of contingency operations, from full-spectrum conflict to operations other than war.

The 4th ID has been designated as the Army’s First Digital Division (FDD), and is expected to be fully fielded by the year 2000. Although the new division design is not the final design for the future, senior Army officers feel it is the right organization for this point in the experimental process and still affords the division the ability to deploy. As the design goes through further experimentation, versions of this structure and the lessons learned will be applied Army-wide, to heavy and light forces.

Even with all of the experimentation, digital testing and redesign actions, the division still has honed and maintained its combat effectiveness and deployability:

- A combined task force of infantry from Fort Carson and armor from Fort Hood conducted an Intrinsic Action rotation to South West Asia last December.

- The division’s 2nd BCT, 4th BCT (Aviation Brigade), and 3rd BCT all executed successful rotations to the National Training Center.

- Armored units supported light/heavy rotations at the Joint Readiness Training Center.

- The 1st BCT conducted extensive Future Battle Command at Brigade and Below (FBCB2) Limited User Tests (LUT) to train units to a higher state of readiness and provide data to the Army’s testing community.

The 4th ID has picked up an additional contingency mission, but will continue Force XXI experimentation in conjunction with Combat Training Center rotations. We are proud of our past, prepared for our missions, and forging ahead. Ironhorse!